

SHOTLEY PENINSULA CYCLING CAMPAIGN

Traffic Surveys – Summer 2011

KEY RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS

Purpose and Methodology

The SPCC conducted traffic surveys at either end of the B1456 on eight days during August and September 2011. The principle purpose of this exercise was to establish as accurate a picture as possible about the number of people who currently cycle along the B1456. We also wanted to know how many vehicles are currently using the B1456 and thus get a better understanding of just how much of a challenge it is to cycle along this busy road. We need this base information in order to build up our case for creating a largely traffic-free Community Path (for cyclists and walkers) from Ipswich to Shotley Gate. With the help of Sustrans, the national cycling charity, we will now be able to make a reasonably accurate estimate about how many more people might be encouraged to cycle on the Shotley Peninsula if we can establish this new path. This estimate will be built into our Final Report and used when seeking the funding needed to construct the path and to convince others about how intimidating the B1456 currently is for cyclists, and indeed, pedestrians.

We used the methodology adopted by Sustrans to record those cycling along a particular route. At both our survey points (one was in Wherstead between the Orwell Bridge and the houses on the Strand and the other was in Shotley Street opposite the Primary School) we selected four days and surveyed all bicycles and vehicles using the B1456 in both directions. In accordance with Sustrans advice we selected a weekday and weekend day in the school holiday (August) and then a weekday and a weekend day in the school term (September). Using this approach we will be able to estimate the current annual cycle usage figure for the B1456. All eight surveys were carried out between 7.00am and 7.00pm (broken into one hour bands), the busiest period of the day for both cyclists and motorists. We split vehicles into five different categories using the classification used by Suffolk County Council, who also endorsed our approach to these surveys and the methodology we used.

Survey Results – Overall Situation

[1] Of the eight days surveyed the busiest (all vehicle movements plus cyclists) was Thursday 22 September at Wherstead (a weekday during the school term). The least busy was Sunday 11 September at Shotley Street.

[2] Overall there were just over 3 times more traffic movements at Wherstead than at Shotley Street.

[3] As would be expected during weekdays the busiest time of the day in the Ipswich to Shotley direction was the pm ‘rush-hour’ period and the busiest period in the Shotley to Ipswich direction was the am ‘rush-hour’. At weekends the traffic tended to peak in the afternoon at both locations.

[4] At Wherstead the weekdays were more busy than the weekends but not significantly so. At Shotley Street the Saturday was as busy as the weekdays and only on the Sunday did the traffic drop-off slightly

[5] Notwithstanding the observation in [3] above it was noticeable that outside of these peaks traffic remained relatively constant throughout the day, remaining relatively high and rarely dropping below about 50% of the peak hour figure.

[6] During the school term there was 16.7% more traffic using the B1456 than during the school holiday.

Vehicular Movements (including motorcycles but excluding cycles)

[7] Overall cars accounted for 85.9% of all the vehicular movements we recorded.

[8] The corresponding figures for motorcycles was 1.5%, LGV's was 9.4%, for HGV's 1.4% and for buses/coaches 0.8%. So, over 1 in 10 (11.6%) of all the vehicular movements on the B.1456 were commercial vehicles or buses.

[9] At both locations buses and coaches peaked on the Thursdays in September, particularly at Wherstead where over 3 times more were recorded than on any other day – suggesting that approximately two-thirds of these were school buses.

[10] The busiest day was at Wherstead on Thursday 22 September when a total of 8387 vehicular movements were recorded in both directions over the 12 hour day – well over 4000 movements in each direction giving an average hourly figure of 350 in each direction across the whole day – or nearly 6 vehicles every minute.

[11] Notwithstanding the observation in [10] above the second busiest day was Sunday 25 September at Wherstead when a total of 8095 vehicles were recorded over the 12 hour period, suggesting that the peninsula is being heavily used for recreational purposes on weekends, especially in the summer.

Bicycles

[12] In total 406 cycle movements were recorded over the 8 eight days, counting both directions – or 51 per day.

[13] There were more cyclists using the road at Wherstead than at Shotley Street although the difference was not that marked(221 v 185).

[14] The busiest day for cyclists was Saturday 20 August at Shotley Street, closely followed by Thursday 22 and Sunday 25 September at Wherstead.

[15] Weekends were more popular for cycling than weekdays (about 2/3rds were at the weekends).

[16] These cycling statistics would have been influenced by the weather conditions – there were some wet days, particularly Thursday 4 August at Wherstead.

Conclusions

[17] These results suggest that the case for a new Community Path (off-road) is most pressing at the Ipswich end of the B1456 where the traffic is heaviest and where there is already slightly more cycling.

[18] The B1456 is heavily used by vehicles and not just during the weekday peaks. Traffic remains heavy throughout the day and is almost as busy over the weekends.

[19] Additionally over 1 in 10 of all vehicles are commercial or buses making cycling conditions on the B1456 even less pleasant.

[20] Despite these intimidating cycling conditions we recorded an average of over 50 cycle movements a day on the B1456 suggesting that this could increase several-fold if a new, traffic-free, path could be provided. Conditions for pedestrians, especially along the Strand, would also be significantly improved.

SPCC

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